

1505, with no amendment in order to the amendment prior to the vote, and that the time be equally divided and controlled between the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. INHOFE, and the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, or their designees; and that at 11:45, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendment without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, last Wednesday I came to the floor and introduced legislation that would place the country in a new direction, a path toward a better energy future, by requiring that 25 percent of electricity be provided by renewable sources in this country. For me, this is not that radical an idea, since my State, the State of Minnesota, just enacted this plan this past year. It was brought into law by an overwhelming majority, a bipartisan majority in a Democratic-controlled legislature, and signed into law by a Republican Governor. In fact, it is even higher for Xcel Energy, which is our largest electricity company. They are bound to a 30-percent standard. In fact, the CEO of that company came and sat in my office and told me that he felt they could meet that standard without increasing rates.

Part of this is that Minnesota has been on the front end of renewables. We have done it with fuel, with biodiesel, and with ethanol—in fact, we have about a third of this country's ethanol that comes right in our State. And we have done it with wind. We have so many wind turbines right now down in southeastern Minnesota, in the Pipestone area, that they have actually opened a bed and breakfast. If you are looking for an interesting weekend, you can go to the bed and breakfast in Pipestone, MN, and wake up in the morning and look at a wind turbine.

But this is serious stuff. I was proud to introduce that 25-by-25 standard, but I also want to say that I support the standard the Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, is introducing in the next few days, and that is a 15 percent by 2020 standard.

Our current path has led us to record-high electricity and natural gas prices. These prices are not only hurting ordinary families, but they are also hurting businesses that see their own costs going up dramatically. The growth of energy-intensive industries, such as manufacturing, is actually being stunted due to skyrocketing energy costs. We already know the negative impact

this situation is having on the environment. It is clear that we need a new direction, that we cannot continue down the energy path we are on anymore. A strong renewable energy policy is good for this country.

Currently, I will say, we do not have a diversified electricity portfolio. Mr. President, 52 percent of our electricity comes from coal, 20 percent is generated using nuclear power, 15 percent natural gas, 7 percent hydro, and only 2.5 percent from renewable energy. A strong renewable electricity standard can actually diversify our energy sources so we are not so reliant on one energy source, such as natural gas, that could be vulnerable to periodic shortages or other supply interruptions.

A strong renewable energy standard can also save the American consumer money. According to several studies, a 15-percent renewable electricity standard will save consumers a total of \$16.4 billion on their energy bills by the year 2030. An aggressive national standard will also open the door to a new electricity industry that will bring in thousands of jobs and pump billions of dollars into our economy.

Over the last 20 years, America's renewable energy industries, and the wind industry in particular, have achieved significant technological advancements. The industries for solar, wind, and biomass energy systems are expanding at rates exceeding 30 percent annually, and the clean energy revolution is still in its infancy. So the question is, Does the United States want to be a leader in creating new green technologies and the new green industries in the future? Are we going to sit back and watch the opportunities pass us by?

We are no longer the world leader in two important energy fields. We rank third now in wind production between Denmark and Spain. We are also third in solar power installed, behind Germany and Japan. Ironically, these countries surpassed us by using technology that was actually developed in our own country. We came up with the right ideas, but we didn't have a plan or the standards in place to adequately fund the deployment of these technologies. That is because the Federal Government has been complacent and let the States take the lead. That is good in some ways. The States, as Justice Brandeis noted, are the laboratories of democracy. He always talked about, in that one opinion, how an individual State can have the courage to experiment and bring us new ideas on a national basis. But I don't think he ever meant this should mean inaction by the Federal Government. Sadly, that is what has been happening.

Twenty-two States now throughout the country have already demonstrated the value of establishing renewable electricity standards. As I mentioned, Minnesota has been one of the most aggressive with its 25-by-25 standard.

The way that bipartisan standard was set, with a Democratic legislature

and a Republican Governor, should be a model for national action. The courage that we have seen in the States must be matched by courage in Washington. We have an opportunity in the next 2 weeks for the Federal Government to act. It is time for the Federal Government to begin moving toward an aggressive national standard on power with State standards.

We have everything we need, we just need to act. I have talked to many investors and businesspeople, and part of the issue is we never think in the long term in government. We don't set these standards out because when you set those standards out, the money is going to follow in terms of investment. But they think the standard is going to change or maybe we just set it for the next 2 years instead of setting it out as Senator BINGAMAN has suggested in his amendment for the year 2020, when we get stronger investment confidence in what we are going to be doing in this country and the new direction in which we are going to be headed in this country.

We have the fields to grow the energy that will keep our Nation moving, and we have the wind energy to propel our economy forward right here in the United States. We have the science, we have the universities, we have the technological know-how. We always believe in science.

In my State, we brought the world the Post-it note and the pacemaker. We have always been on the front end in science. That is why the people who are committed to a strong, renewable standard in our State are not just limited to the people who might be investing in it. It is students at the university who see the potential. It is kids who wear little buttons about "save our penguins." It is the city council down in Lanesboro, MN, that recently changed out all of their lightbulbs because they are concerned about climate change. It is farmers who are putting up wind turbines in their backyard because they know it is going to save them money. It is school districts that say: Maybe I will get a wind turbine. It is governments across this land, with mayors and city councils that are installing solar energy, that see the future and see this new direction.

It is our job in the next 2 weeks to lead the new direction. And that is why I support a strong renewable standard. That is why I urge my fellow Senators to support the amendment, which I am already cosponsoring, for a 15-percent renewable standard for electricity in this country. We have to start now.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.